

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 23007 01 OF 02 271815Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----017476 271817Z /43
P 271710Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3510
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 23007

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV IS EG
SUBJECT: ISMAILIA SUMMIT--NEW FONMIN KAMEL REACTIONS

1. PAID MY FIRST COURTESY CALL THIS MORNING ON NEW FONMIN MOHAMMED IBRAHIM KAMEL. MINSTATE BOUTROS GHALI WAS WITH HIM. I FOUND BOTH OF THEM IN AN AGITATED STATE.

2. IN CONTRAST TO SADAT'S SOMBER BUT GUARDEDLY POSITIVE VIEW (SEPTEL), KAMEL'S FIRST WORDS TO ME WERE THAT THE ISMAILIA SUMMIT HAD BEEN A FAILURE. GHALI ECHOED THIS SENTIMENT. BEGIN AND THE ISRAELI SIDE HAD COME UP WITH THE SAME HACKNEYED IDEAS. THEIR CONCEPT OF "SELF-RULE" FOR THE PALESTINIANS IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA WAS INADEQUATE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SITUATION. SADAT'S DRAMATIC TRIP TO JERUSALEM HAD BEEN ILL-REQUITED.

3. BEGIN HAD PROPOSED A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WHICH, IF ACCEPTED, WOULD HAVE BEEN DISASTROUS FOR EGYPT AND THE ARAB WORLD. WHEN I MENTIONED MY UNDERSTANDING THAT PRESIDENT SADAT HAD BEEN CONSIDERING ACCEPTING THE ISRAELI DRAFT UNTIL DISSUADED FROM DOING SO BY HIS AIDES, BOTH KAMEL AND GHALI READILY ADMITTED THEY HAD URGED HIM NOT TO DO SO. IN THEIR VIEW, IT WOULD HAVE MEANT LOSS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 23007 01 OF 02 271815Z

OF ANY EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE ARAB WORLD AND WOULD HAVE EXPOSED SADAT TO EVEN MORE REJECTIONIST ATTACKS. WHAT IS NEEDED, THEY ARGUED, IS A DECLARATION THAT SPEAKS OF "SELF-DETERMINATION" FOR THE PALESTINIANS. SO LONG AS THIS ELEMENT IS IN SUCH A DECLARATION, IT CAN BE SOLD TO THE ARABS.

4. I TOLD KAMEL AND GHALI THAT, WHILE I UNDERSTOOD THEIR POSITION THAT THE BEGIN PLAN WAS LESS THAN THEY MAY HAVE HOPED FOR, THEY SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT BEGIN HAS COME A LONG WAY IN HIS THINKING. A FEW MONTHS AGO IT WOULD HAVE BEEN INCONCEIVABLE THAT BEGIN SUGGEST "SELF-RULE" FOR THE PALESTINIANS IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, BUT HE HAS NOW DONE SO. THIS RETHINKING OF ISRAELI POSITION IS LARGELY THE RESULT OF SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM. KAMEL AND GHALI DISMISSED THIS IDEA. GHALI NOTED THAT THE BEGIN PLAN IS LITTLE MORE THAN DAYAN'S "FUNCTIONAL" DIVISION CONCEPT. IT FALLS FAR SHORT OF LEGITIMATE PALESTINIAN AND ARAB ASPIRATIONS.

5. SINCE SADAT HAD MENTIONED NOTHING ABOUT A "REVIEW" AFTER FIVE YEARS, I ASKED KAMEL AND GHALI WHETHER THIS IDEA HAD COME UP IN THE TALKS. NEITHER RECALLED THAT IT HAD. GHALI SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO CHECK WITH HIS NOTES, BUT WAS SURE THAT IF IT HAD COME UP, HE WOULD HAVE REMEMBERED IT.

6. KAMEL AND GHALI MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR USG "PRESSURE" ON ISRAEL IN THE PERIOD AHEAD TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. UNLESS THIS HAPPENS, THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS WILL ABORT IN SIX TO EIGHT WEEKS AND SADAT WILL BE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE AT HOME AND IN THE ARAB WORLD. ALREADY, KAMEL CLAIMED, HE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 23007 01 OF 02 271815Z

HAS HEARD SHARP CRITICISM FROM EGYPTIANS WHOSE VIEWS HE RESPECTS FOR THE FAILURE OF THE ISMAILIA SUMMIT TO REACH MEANINGFUL AGREEMENT. ECHOING SADAT'S VIEW, KAMEL SAID INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION MUST BE BROUGHT TO BEAR UPON BEGIN TO ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF "SELF-DETERMINATION" FOR THE PALESTINIANS. HE NOTED FRG CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT ARRIVES TODAY AND SAID BOTH PRESIDENT SADAT AND HE INTENDS TO URGE THIS POINT ON THE CHANCELLOR AND SOLICIT THE LATTER'S SUPPORT.

7. GHALI CONFIDED THAT IN ESTABLISHING THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY COMMITTEES, THE ISRAELIS HAD TRIED HARD TO MAKE BOTH EXCLUSIVELY BILATERAL. THEY HAD SOUGHT TO EXCLUDE THE US AND UN FROM THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE AS WELL AS THE MILITARY COMMITTEE. ON GHALI'S STRONG URGING, HOWEVER, SADAT HAD INSISTED THAT THE US AND UN SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE. THE US MUST PARTICIPATE, GHALI HAD INSISTED, IF THERE IS TO BE ANY HOPE OF REACHING AGREEMENT. ASKED ABOUT THE CHANGE FROM PARTICIPANT TO "OBSERVER" STATUS FOR THE US AND UN, GHALI SAID THIS HAD BEEN AN ISRAELI SUGGESTION AFTER EGYPTIANS REFUSED IDEA OF BILATERAL COMMITTEE. AFTER CONSIDERABLE

ARGUMENT THE ISREALIS HAD RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTED THIS.

8. KAMEL APOLOGIZED FOR TAKING UP BUSINESS ON MY FIRST CALL. HE SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS AND INVITED ME TO COME TO SEE HIM AT ANY TIME THAT I WISHED.

9. COMMENT: KAMEL, WHOM I HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY MET, GIVES

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 23007 02 OF 02 271817Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P 271710Z DEC 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3511
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 23007

EXDIS

THE IMPRESSION OF A SOMEWHAT NERVOUS INDIVIDUAL. HE HAS A CIRCULATORY PROBLEM WHICH GIVES HIM SOME TROUBLE IN WALKING. HE SEEMS TO BE CLOSE TO THE PRESIDENT SINCE SADAT TOLD ME HE WAS ONE OF HIS "BOYS" AND THAT I SHOULD FEEL FREE TO DISCUSS ANYTHING WITH HIM. HE IS CLEARLY A STRONG ADVOCATE OF PAN-ARABISM AND SEEMS TO GET ALONG WELL WITH BOUTROS GHALI. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE MFA IS LIMITED AND HE WILL HAVE A GREAT DEAL TO LEARN. EILTS

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